

Anne Lusk, Ph.D.
18 Hart Street
Brookline, MA 02445
AnneLusk@hsph.harvard.edu
617-879-4887
March 22, 2021

Tina McCarthy
Brookline Preservation Commission
333 Washington Street
Brookline, MA 02445

Dear Ms. McCarthy:

Please accept this letter in response to the application for a Demolition Certificate for full demolition of the house at 17 Hart Street by Alex Neary and Zi Ye that was submitted on February 16, 2021. In accordance with Section 5.3 of the Town's By-law, the Commission staff, in consultation with the Chair, made an initial determination as to whether the building in question falls into one or more of the categories listed under paragraphs a-d in Section 5.3.5 and which identifies a building as significant. In the case of the house at 17 Hart Street, the property's significance meets the following criteria in Section 5.3.5—

- c. The building is associated with one or more significant historic persons or events, or with the broad architectural, cultural, political, economic, or social history of the town or Commonwealth; and
- d. The building is historically or architecturally significant in terms of its period, style, method of construction, or its association with a significant architect or either by itself or as part of a group of buildings.

The below are the perceptions I have in relation to c:

Historical person – The Hart Street cottages were built around 1820 by Benjamin Bradley, a master carpenter who learned the trade at a young age from Mr. Nathaniel Murdock. Mr. Bradley was a sexton of the Unitarian Church for 30 years and Captain of the Brookline militia for 10 years, earning the name Captain Bradley. Captain Bradley formed Bradley's Hill upon which there were eventually 21 cottages with a central building that served as a church and affordable lodging. <https://www.digitalcommonwealth.org/search/commonwealth:0r96fq260>

Cultural – After Captain Bradley's death, Mr. Hart moved the cottages in 1870 to what he named Hart's Content, later called Hart Street. He also moved cottages to Franklin Court, which backs onto the yards of homes on Hart Street. By moving the cottages, he was saving them from demolition on Bradley Hill. The homes, owned or rented by working class Irish Catholics, housed large families. The settlement that eventually included the town yard and stables, was called Whiskey Point. The Irish Catholics in the area could earn a good living because they were local and did not have to compete with the Irish Catholics in the Boston area for jobs.

Social history of the Town – Reading obituaries of individuals who grew up in the neighborhood, Whiskey Point is included. Residents were proud to have lived their lives on Hart Street and the nearby streets. On the street, everyone looked out for one another. Two brothers used to rent 16 Hart Street and one brother was shell shocked from World War I. Even the young children knew to be respectful of the brother. Clean sheets, stored in one Hart Street house, went to the house where a baby was being born. Ursula Minihan lived in my house, 18 Hart Street, and the neighbors knew she did not have a bathroom or a hot water heater. Neighbors used to carry her groceries home from nearby Kurkman's Market. The bank gave me a loan that specified I could not occupy the house until upgrades were completed.

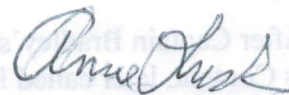
The below are the perceptions I have in relation to d:

Building historically/architecturally significant for period/style/method of construction – The 1820 cottages on Hart Street are two over two, or two rooms up and two rooms down. Some have had additions. The framing is post and beam and the timbers and extremely wide boards pit sawn. The beams are marked with Roman numeral hatchings and the nails hand-forged. Some of the houses retain the winding staircase and wide horizontal or vertical boards that serve as wainscoting or walls.

Association with a significant architect as part of a group of buildings – The cottages, built by Benjamin Bradley, are in the style of 1820 for affordable housing. When the cottages were moved to Hart Street, they were placed to face each, with each having an offset so there is a view between the cottages. As the street has a slight slope, the houses resemble the "Painted Ladies of San Francisco" and convey, though much more humbly, a similar rhythm of setback, spacing, gable, roof pitch, and fenestration. In San Francisco, there are 7 painted ladies on one side of the street. On Hart Street, 11 cottages of similar size and charm are on both sides of the street. While other areas in Brookline and Boston once had affordable housing, in Brookline, the lower income housing on the Farm and Marsh was demolished to make way for modern buildings, including Brook House. To the author's knowledge, no other area in Massachusetts has a colony of workman's cottages lined up in two facing rows. Places such as Old Sturbridge Village have a few randomly spaced cottages, similar to those on Hart Street, but those serve as museums.

Thank you for your consideration in not approving the demolition certificate for 17 Hart Street.

Sincerely,



Anne Lusk, Ph.D.

Mary Tynan
6 Hart Street
Brookline, MA 02445
617-566-8253
J319misty@aol.com
March 22, 2021

Tina McCarthy
Brookline Preservation Commission
333 Washington Street
Brookline, MA 02445

Dear Ms. McCarthy:

I was appalled when I heard of the tearing down of 17 Hart Street, one of the Hart's Content colony established generations ago 1870 \pm as the first settlement in this section of town.

I would like to convey to you my thoughts and reasons for not wanting it removed. I was born in Whiskey Point as a second generation. My dad was also born here. I was 6 months old when I came to live at 6 Hart Street, or "Hart's Content," Our family was comprised of 4 older brothers and 2 younger daughters. I know the area, people, and events.

There is a special charm in owning one of the cottages. Each cottage has been cared for with constant upkeep by its owners, with joy in the doing for decades. A changed landscape would take away the continuance of houses necessary to keep the houses as an intact "colony." One cannot imagine what Horace Hart had in mind with the odd way the houses are placed in close proximity but, through the decades, it has not been a problem socially.

The Hart's Content neighbors take pride in raising families, holding garden parties during the summer, or holiday parties and get-togethers on New Year's Day.

My memories are many, and here are a few that come to mind:

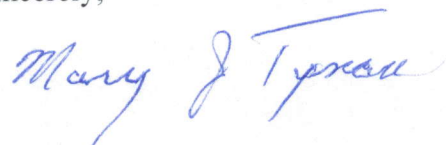
1. All the cottages on Hart Street used to be lit up with Christmas lights, framing each cottage, making Hart Street picturesque.
2. Carolers came at Christmas.
3. Hart Street was closed off so, during the summer, the neighbors could hold block parties and, during winter, the kids could coast down the street that was covered with snow.
4. Neighbors were also been fortunate to witness brides coming out of their home before going to the church for their wedding.

We are, as in the past decades, families united and secure on "Hart's Content."

My involvement in the past years with the "Olmsted Legacy," the Olmsted Associates, Government, National Park Service, the National Olmsted Parks authors, colleges, and universities has given me a love of and insight about Historic Preservation. I want to speak out for the preservation of 17 Hart Street.

If you have any questions, my contact information is provided.

Sincerely,



Mary Tynan